

## Tanner-Williams

# Class of '29 still kicking; six married for 50 years

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**TANNER-WILLIAMS** — Fifty-eight years ago six girls and three boys graduated from what was then Tanner Williams High School.

The class of 1929 recently held a reunion with six of the seven class members attending. They have met annually each year since holding a "golden anniversary" reunion eight years ago.

All members of the class are still living. Six of them have celebrated their 50th wedding anniversaries. There have been no divorces among any of its members.

Class members were Rosa Lee Pierce Parden and Lena Roberts Roberts, both of Tanner-Williams community, Mellonee Odom Niver of Mobile, Ethel Gibson Doggett of Howell Community in George County, Bessie Tanner Savoie of West Wego, La., and Ella Dudley Hennon of Port Neches, Texas, and Jewel Middleton, Harry Seward and Guy Williams, all of Tanner-Williams.

The school, located in Alabama on the Mississippi line, served children of both states until a few years ago.

"Children living east of Dog River in Mississippi went to Tanner-Williams," Seward said. "It was three miles from my home to Tanner-Williams. We had to travel 15 miles to get to Hurley (nearest Mississippi school)."

"Ours was the seventh graduating class of Tanner-Williams High School," Seward said. "At that time it was a vocational high school and now its a grade school."

Since there was no electrical service to the community, only hand tools could be used in the carpenter shop. For metal working, there was only a blacksmith shop.

While the boys were in agriculture classes, the girls studied music and homemaking.

Seward said his family moved from Big Island community in Big Point to Tanner-Williams community so that he and his sister, Florence, could attend school.

That was only a few years after the Seward's father, M.A. Seward, moved his family from Missouri to Louisiana in a horse-drawn wagon and buggy.

"That was in 1910," Seward said. "I was 10 years old. It took us 22 days to get from Missouri to Shreveport and it took 20 days to come from Shreveport here."

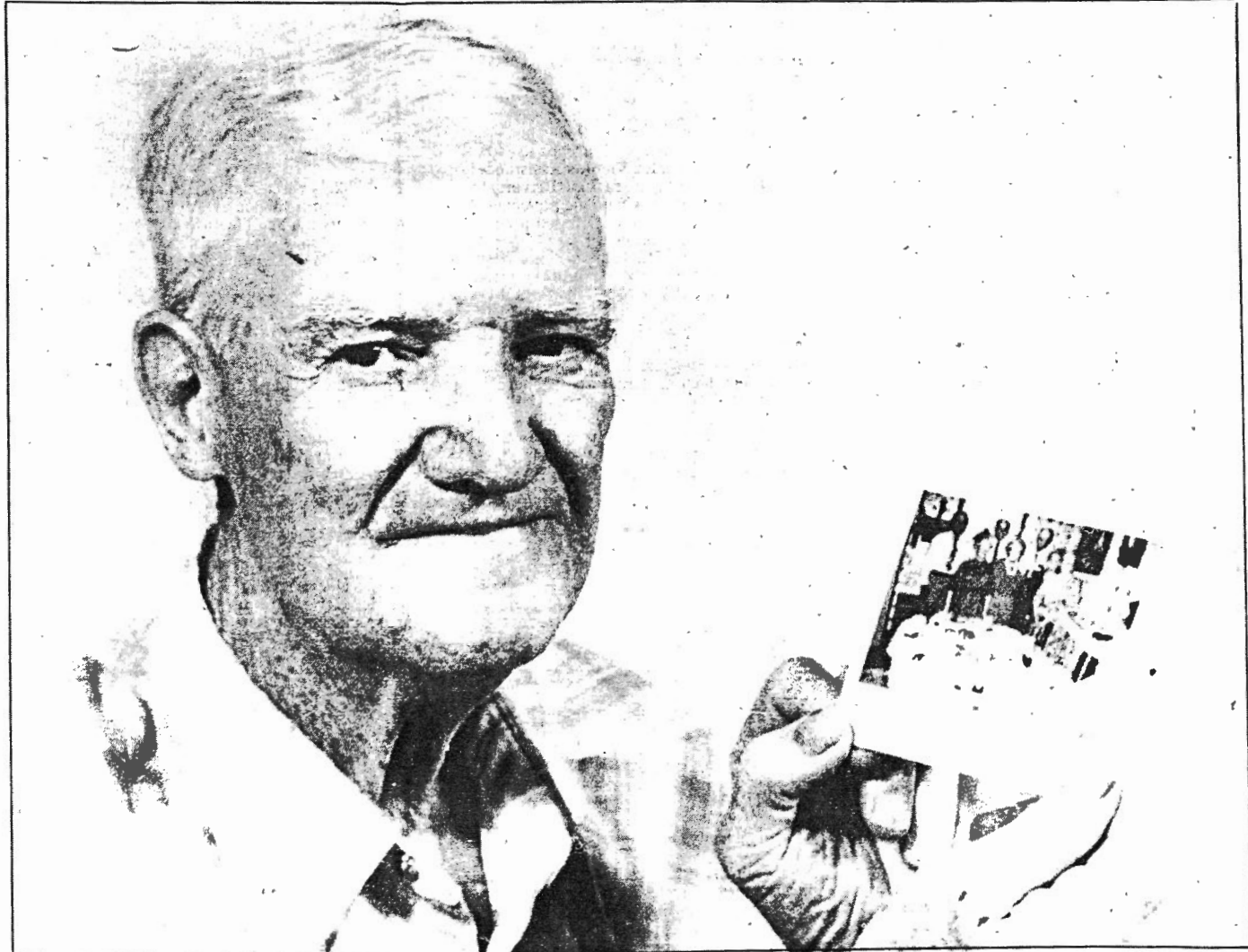
Seward said two events stand out in his mind about the journey.

"In Arkansas we broke an axle on a rock," he said. "It was Saturday afternoon and we were near a church."

Seward said church members showed up the next day and helped his father make a new axle from a tree and asked them to dinner.

"We fixed the axle and had a picnic that Sunday," he said.

The second event Seward recalled was at Baton Rouge where they crossed the Mississippi River on



**CLASS REUNION** — Harry Seward of Tanner Williams community looks at a photo of the Tanner

Williams High School class of 1929 which held a class reunion in May. All members of the class are still living.

Press Plus Photo/Carol Waddell

a ferry.

"When we got to the other side, a man had a hitch team to help travelers get up the steep bluff. He would hitch his team to the other team and get them up the bluff."

"Paw said he didn't think he needed any help and he got our teams up the bluff without the hitch team."

The Seward's moved to Big Island because they

knew a family by the name of Myers who already lived there.

Other families in the area at the time included the Nelsons, Arborns and Grafes.

"Paw knew farming here would be different than in Missouri," Seward said, "so he went to the oldest man in the community, Uncle John Goff, and asked him how to farm."

"Uncle John later said that Paw was the first

man who came here to make a crop his first year. He just followed Uncle John's advice."

After graduation from Tanner-Williams High, Seward, now, 76, became a successful farmer. He has been living on the same farm since 1940. Through the years he has been active in many community affairs, especially the Jackson County School system and the Hurley and East Central schools.